

Successful Recruiting Strategies

[Save to myBoK](#)

by Kayce Dover, MSHI, RHIA

It can be a challenge to hire the HIM professionals your organization needs. Smart managers and their HR departments stay proactive.

As the demand for HIM professionals continues to increase and the supply of experienced HIM professionals continues to lag, implementing a successful recruitment strategy is increasingly important.¹ Vacancies within the HIM department can have significant impacts on the revenue cycle, negatively affecting the hospital's bottom line.² Reducing vacancies is essential.

To help meet today's challenges, HIM recruitment professionals recommend a multifaceted approach combining traditional and nontraditional methods for attracting and acquiring HIM professionals.

One of the main challenges for hospitals and recruiting firms is the disparity between the supply of new graduates and the demand for experienced professionals. As CIO of the University of Alabama (UAB) Health System for the past six years, Joan Hicks, MSHI, RHIA, has experienced the challenges involved in finding qualified professionals for UAB's 1,000-bed hospital. "Finding credentialed, experienced employees who understand and appreciate HIM processes is important," she says. "Knowledge of HIM workflow is critical, regardless of the environment."

As qualified HIM professionals become increasingly hard to find, HIM must assume an active role in the recruitment process. With the employment outlook for HIM expected to remain dynamic for the foreseeable future, the success of an organization's recruitment strategies will be largely determined by its ability to adapt to impending change.

Strategies

Today's market is candidate-driven, and HIM departments must keep abreast of the new roles and opportunities available to HIM professionals. Both HIM and human resources must continually adapt and evolve to ensure a competitive advantage.

Communication and education . With rapidly changing roles in HIM and rising demand for qualified personnel, it is critical to communicate with human resources and provide education regarding changes in the field and the effect on recruitment. HIM professionals must convey the impact on the department and the hospital's bottom line when HIM positions go unfilled.

Hicks works closely with UAB's human resources, whose staff members have many years of hospital experience and knowledge of the HIM profession. "We hold regular meetings to discuss recruiting, training, and issues that need to be addressed," Hicks says.

Competitive compensation . Being competitive is not entirely salary-driven. Hospitals must offer a compensation package that balances salary with quality of life benefits such as flexible hours, working from home, advancement opportunities, and relocation support.

Proactive recruiting . The traditional, reactive approach to recruiting costs time and money in advertising, contract labor, training, and more. Proactive recruiting means networking through professional associations, online networks, and forums to establish a pipeline of qualified candidates, even when there are no vacancies.

Creating an in-house referral program can ensure a pool of internal referrals. Studies show that referrals from top performers are consistently ranked as providing the highest quality applicants.³

Advertising and promotion . A candidate-driven market demands an approach that resembles a good sales strategy. Luring qualified candidates from existing jobs requires promoting the facility and community along with the position. The most effective ads convey all selling points, such as facility awards and rankings, competitive compensation, and community assets—including geographic location, schools, and recreation.

Online resources . Today's job seekers use online resources as their primary search tool. And the Internet is second only to employee referrals as the best source for hiring. As a result, leveraging the Internet should be an integral part of a successful recruiting strategy, particularly "niche" job boards that connect candidates with employers and recruiters seeking HIM professionals.

Staffing and recruiting firms . For Hicks, engaging a recruiting firm specializing in HIM was the best strategy for filling UAB's HIM administrative director position. The benefits of a specialized firm include access to a broad candidate network, reduced advertising expenses, candidate pre-qualification, and evaluation of actual costs.

When selecting a firm, first make sure the recruiters understand the HIM profession and have a proven track record. Then ask questions about recruitment methods, placement guarantees, and fee structure.

Notes

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Medical Records and Health Information Technicians." *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2008-09 edition. Available online at www.bls.gov/oco/ocoS103.htm.
2. Meyers, Susan. "Coder Shortage Goes Straight to the Bottom Line." *Hospitals and Health Networks*, January 16, 2004. Available online at www.hhnmag.com/hhnmag_app/hospitalconnect/search/article.jsp?dcrpath=AHA/PubsNewsArticle/data/0401HHN_FEA_Workforce&domain=HHNMAG.
3. Direct Employers. "2006 Direct Employers Association Recruiting Trends Survey." February 2006. Available online at www.jobcentral.com/DEsurvey.pdf.

Kayce Dover (kdover@himconnections.com) is president of HIM Connections.

Article citation:

Dover, Kayce. "Successful Recruiting Strategies" *Journal of AHIMA* 79, no.10 (October 2008): 40-42.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

Copyright 2022 by The American Health Information Management Association. All Rights Reserved.